



STATE SENATOR  
**BOB**  
**MEEKS**

INDIANA STATEHOUSE  
200 W. WASHINGTON STREET  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

[www.in.gov/S13](http://www.in.gov/S13)

Prst Std  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Indianapolis, IN  
Permit No. 7767



# INFO & NEWS *from the* Indiana Senate

## Tips to Remember on Election Day



In recent years, the General Assembly has made some changes to the sometimes confusing voting process. I have compiled a list of tips to help make the voting process easier. If

you have questions or need further information, visit [www.indianavoters.com](http://www.indianavoters.com).

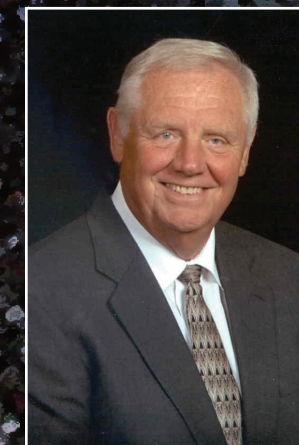
**Plan Ahead:** Visit [www.indianavoters.com](http://www.indianavoters.com) to check your voter registration and polling place location. Call your county clerk's office or board of elections for further information.

**Have Photo ID Available:** All voters must provide government issued photo ID before casting a ballot. The ID must display the voter's photo, name matching the voter's registration record, an expiration day, and be issued by the State of Indiana or the U.S. government.

**Your Ballot, Your Vote:** Don't panic if you registered to vote but your name is not on the list. Poll workers can help ensure that your vote is counted. You may be directed to another polling place or given a provisional ballot.

**Observe the Writing on the Wall:** Read the signs at the polling place for directions on how to use the voting machines, a list of your voting rights, and instructions for filing a complaint if you feel your rights have been violated.

**When in Doubt, Ask:** Poll workers are there to assist you! They will show you how to work the machines and give you a provisional ballot, if needed.



STATE SENATOR  
**BOB**  
**MEEKS**

Serving District 13 in LaGrange  
and Steuben Counties





Sen. Meeks listens to testimony from Sen. David Ford (R-Hartford City) during a committee meeting regarding the privatization of the Indiana Toll Road. Sen. Meeks is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

## Did You Know...?

... that the average property tax bill went down this year?

... that on June 30, 2006, the state officially overcame a \$600 million deficit and closed its books for the fiscal year with a balanced budget for the first time in a decade?

How to contact  
Senator Bob Meeks

200 W. WASHINGTON ST.  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

CALL, TOLL-FREE:  
1-800-382-9467

E-MAIL VIA MY WEB SITE AT:  
WWW.IN.GOV/S13

# Job Creation Legislation Proves Successful

— Even more jobs for Hoosiers are on the way —

Although the last two legislative sessions have been filled with substantial changes to the way Indiana does business, a priority for the Senate has been job creation. Although government actions cannot create jobs overnight, Indiana is beginning to see results just one year after the major economic development laws of 2005 were implemented.

In 2005, the General Assembly sped up and streamlined the creation of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), created tax breaks for research and development, passed a shovel-ready site development plan and expanded existing tax credits. The result: 85,000 more Hoosiers are working today than in January 2005 and unemployment has fallen to 4.9 percent. Thousands more job commitments have already been made, and even more are predicted over the next three years.

Recent job announcements include:

- **Honda announcing a \$550 million plant that will employ 2,000 people in Greensburg (the plant will have capacity for 4,000**

employees)

- **BAE adding 36 new jobs at its Fort Wayne facility, in addition to 50 new jobs created in the last year**

- **Ellison Bakery, a manufacturer of cookies and cookie-based products, announcing a \$3.9 expansion of its Fort Wayne operations**

- **Central State Enterprises announcing the construction of a 100-million gallon corn ethanol facility in Montpelier, bringing 200 jobs during construction, along with 40 permanent jobs**

- **Arbonne International opening a 400-employee distribution center in Greenwood**

- **Nestle selecting Anderson for a 300-job facility**

- **Sallie Mae announcing 700 new jobs in Muncie**

Many other announcements have occurred in the past 18 months, many more are expected in the future, and I am committed to continuing to create a job-friendly environment here in Indiana.

## MAJOR MOVES MEANS MAJOR MONEY

Northeast Indiana to benefit from lease of Toll Road

On June 28, Indiana closed a lease with Statewide Mobility Partners, which will operate the Indiana Toll Road in exchange for **\$3.8 billion**. That money has been deposited and is currently earning interest at a rate of about **\$500,000 every day**. For an up-to-the-second look at how much interest has been accrued, visit [www.in.gov/tos/MajorMoves.htm](http://www.in.gov/tos/MajorMoves.htm)

All of this money will go toward improving infrastructure in the state of Indiana, and District 13 will see millions of dollars in road improvements in the coming years. In addition to the local projects planned by the Indiana Department of Transportation, the legislature also approved \$150 million in payments to local governments to be used as they see fit.

Here is a breakdown of what the counties in District 13 will receive over just two years:

- **LaGrange County — \$37,392,880**
- **Steuben County — \$41,031,000**

As you can see, Major Moves will generate a significant amount of money for our area that will improve the quality of life. I look forward to seeing a lot more orange construction barrels on the streets I represent in the coming years.



# Property Tax Q and A

SEN. MEEKS ANSWERS CONSTITUENTS' MOST PRESSING QUESTIONS

**Q:** Some people are saying the biennial budget passed by House and Senate Republicans is responsible for big increases in property taxes. Is this true?

**A:** No. We are not even expecting significant property tax increases for Pay 2006. In fact, it is estimated that, on average, property tax bills for homeowners for Pay 2006 taxes will show no increase.

**Q:** Didn't the budget include some provisions that would allow for property tax increases?

**A:** Yes. The school formula always allows for modest property tax increases to pay for the local share of operating schools. The school formula for 2006 allowed an average statewide increase in the gross levy of 2.5%. Because the state pays a portion of each taxpayer's tax bill through payment of property tax replacement credits and homestead credits, the school formula was expected to increase the actual tax bill for homeowners by only .6%.

**Q:** Didn't the budget also include new "special provisions" in addition to the formula that permitted additional property tax increases?

**A:** Yes. The biennial budget allows schools to increase property taxes to help pay for things like high utility bills, textbooks, and increased costs to transport children to school. The budget also allows counties to increase property taxes to pay for juvenile detention. When compared to the existing total levy and the overall cost to run local government, the increases resulting from these special provisions were minor.

**Q:** How big were the increases resulting from the special provisions?

**A:** If every school and every county chooses to increase its levy to the maximum extent allowed in the budget, those provisions would have increased average tax bills for Pay 2006 taxes for homeowners by about 2.1%.

**Q:** Weren't there going to be additional "normal" property tax increases anyway?

**A:** Yes. Property tax bills for homeowners were going to increase by about 2.8% anyway to fund normal inflationary increases in local budgets.

**Q:** That doesn't sound like a big increase. Aren't local property tax levies growing faster than 2.8% per year?

**A:** Levies, or the total amounts taxing units collect, are growing faster - by about 4% to 5% per year. Because of the addition of new investment in housing and new businesses, the total assessed values for taxing units is also increasing. This additional assessed valuation pays part of the levy increase so individual tax bills are increasing at a slower rate. That is why economic growth is so important - it helps hold down taxes for everyone.

**Q:** So, if tax bills were expected to grow by 2.8% for normal levy growth and an additional 2.1% for the special provisions included in the budget, should I expect my property tax bill grow by about 5% for Pay 2006 Taxes?

**A:** No. To offset the estimated 5% property tax increase for homeowners, the General Assembly increased the homestead credit from 20% to 28% for Pay 2006 taxes (at a cost to the State of \$100 million). This is estimated to reduce tax bills for homeowners by about 5%.

**Q:** Will the estimated reduction offset the estimated increase?

**A:** Yes. On average, actual tax bills for homeowners for Pay 2006 taxes should not increase or could even decrease slightly if local taxing units don't enact all the increases.

**Q:** These are statewide averages. Won't tax bills increase for some homeowners?

**A:** Yes. Some homeowners will see increased tax bills.

**Q:** What would cause an increase for some homeowners but not others?

**A:** Higher than average increases in the local tax levy. Most often this happens as result of construction of a new school, library or fire station. Local taxing units generally increase property taxes to pay debt service on new buildings. Where that happens, even with the increased homestead credit, homeowner's taxes could rise.



Sen. Meeks discussing legislation with Sen. David Long (R-Ft. Wayne) during the 2006 legislative session.

**Q:** So, if there is no new building construction in a taxing district, homeowners should not see an increase in their property tax bills for Pay 2006 taxes?

**A:** Generally, that is correct. Remember, we have many school corporations and local government taxing districts. There may be a few exceptions.

**Q:** Why are tax bills expected to show little or no increase for homeowners and farmers but rise for business property?

**A:** Business property doesn't benefit from the increased homestead credit or the \$880/acre assessed value for farmland. Business property benefits from other provisions such as the elimination of the inventory tax that will be in effect statewide for Pay 2007 taxes. The General Assembly's top priority has been to protect homeowners - particularly those on fixed incomes - from rising property taxes.

**Q:** What about other classes of taxpayers?

**A:** Some other classes of taxpayers may see an increase in their 2006 Tax Bill. Farmers are expected to see average tax bills increase by about .2%. Business tax bills are expected to rise by an average of about 6%.

**Q:** Where do we go from here?

**A:** In each of the past two years Senate Republicans have passed legislation that would have limited - or eliminated - property tax increases by shifting the burden to Local Option Income Taxes. This system, which is more closely based on "ability to pay," would lead to lower property taxes for all classes of taxpayers in the future. The General Assembly will look at this issue again in the 2007 Session.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S  
TOP PRIORITY HAS BEEN TO  
PROTECT HOMEOWNERS -  
PARTICULARLY THOSE ON  
FIXED INCOMES -  
FROM RISING  
PROPERTY TAXES.